

15 SEP 2005



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Commissioner for Patents
United States Patent and Trademark Office
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

IP Law Department
Schlumberger Reservoir Completions
14910 Airline Drive
Rosharon, Texas 77583

In re Application of	:	
FREER et al.	:	
U.S. Application No.: 10/532,252	:	DECISION ON PETITION
PCT No.: PCT/GB03/04542	:	UNDER 37 CFR 1.47(a)
Int. Filing Date: 22 October 2003	:	
Priority Date: 23 October 2002	:	
Attorney Docket No.: 102.0002US/PCT	:	
For: SIGNALING METHOD AND	:	
APPARATUS	:	

This decision is in response to applicants' "Petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) Seeking Joinder of Joint Inventor Who Refuses to Join in Application" filed 21 April 2005, which is being treated as a petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) to accept the application without the signature of joint inventor, Alex Watt.

BACKGROUND

On 22 October 2003, applicants filed international application PCT/GB03/04542 which claimed a priority date of 23 October 2002. A copy of the international application was communicated to the United States Patent and Trademark Office from the International Bureau on 06 May 2004. Pursuant to 37 CFR 1.495, the thirty-month period for paying the basic national fee in the United States expired at midnight on 23 April 2005.

On 21 April 2005, applicants filed a transmittal letter for entry into the national stage in the United States, which accompanied by, inter alia: the requisite basic national fee as required by 35 U.S.C. 371(c)(1); a preliminary amendment; and a Petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a).

DISCUSSION

A petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) must be accompanied by (1) the fee under 37 CFR 1.17(h), (2) factual proof that the missing joint inventor refuses to execute the application or cannot be reached after diligent effort, (3) a statement of the last known address of the missing inventor, and (4) an oath or declaration by each 37 CFR 1.47(a) applicant on his or her own behalf and behalf of the non-signing joint inventor. Items (1) and (3) have been satisfied.

Regarding item (2) above, petitioner states that Alex Watt has refused to sign the application. Section 409.03(d) of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (M.P.E.P.), **Proof of Unavailability or Refusal**, states, in part:

Where a refusal of the inventor to sign the application papers is alleged, the circumstances of the presentation of the application papers and of the refusal must be specified in a statement of facts by the person who presented the inventor with the application papers and/or to whom the refusal was made. Statements by a party not present when an oral refusal is made will not be accepted.

Proof that a bona fide attempt was made to present a copy of the application papers (specification, including claims, drawings, and oath or declaration) to the nonsigning inventor for signature, but the inventor refused to accept delivery of the papers or expressly stated that the application papers should not be sent, may be sufficient. When there is an express oral refusal, that fact along with the time and place of the refusal must be stated in the statement of facts. When there is an express written refusal, a copy of the document evidencing that refusal must be made part of the statement of facts. The document may be redacted to remove material not related to the inventor's reasons for refusal.

When it is concluded by the 37 CFR 1.47 applicant that a nonsigning inventor's conduct constitutes a refusal, all facts upon which that conclusion is based should be stated in the statement of facts in support of the petition or directly in the petition. If there is documentary evidence to support facts alleged in the petition or in any statement of facts, such evidence should be submitted. Whenever a nonsigning inventor gives a reason for refusing to sign the application oath or declaration, that reason should be stated in the petition.

A review of the present petition reveals that petitioner has not shown that a bona fide attempt was made to present the application papers (specification, claims, and drawings) to Alex Watt. Petitioner states that, "the declaration, assignment document, and a copy of a Patent and Confidential Information Agreement were sent to Mr. Watt by letter dated 17 March 2005 and that Mr. Watt refused to execute the application in a telephone conversation on April 15, 2005." However, petitioner has not presented evidence that a complete copy of the application (specification, claims, and drawings) has been mailed to the nonsigning inventor. The mailing of the Declaration and Assignment is not considered a complete copy of the application (specification, claims, and drawings). Additionally, the statement regarding the mailing of the declaration and assignment constitutes secondhand knowledge, in that, the mailing to which the petitioner is averring to was conducted by Paula Brooks.

As stated above, where a refusal of the inventor to sign the application papers is alleged, a statement of facts is needed from a person having first hand knowledge of the

facts that a complete copy of the application papers (specification, claims, and drawings) were sent to Alex Watt, and when such papers were sent. In addition, copies of documentary evidence such as a certified mail return receipt, cover letter of instruction, telegrams, etc., should be supplied with the declaration.

As to Item (4), the declaration filed on 21 April 2005 is defective pursuant to 37 CFR 1.497(a)(3) which requires that the declaration "identify each inventor and the residence and country of citizenship of each inventor." Section 201.03 of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure states, in part,

While each inventor need not execute the same oath or declaration, each oath or declaration executed by an inventor must contain a complete listing of all inventors so as to clearly indicate what each inventor believes to be the appropriate inventive entity . . . For example, where the inventive entity is A and B, a declaration may not be executed only by A naming only A as the inventor and a different declaration may not be executed only by B naming only B as the inventor . . .

Here, each inventor has executed a separate declaration which only identifies the particular inventor signing that declaration, which is improper. Thus, applicants are required to file a newly executed declaration which complies with 37 CFR 1.497(a) and (b).

For the reasons stated above, it would not be appropriate to accept the application without the signature of Alex Watt under 37 CFR 1.47(a) at this time.

CONCLUSION

The petition under 37 CFR 1.47(a) is **DISMISSED** without prejudice.

If reconsideration on the merits of this petition is desired, a proper response must be filed within **TWO (2) MONTHS** from the mail date of this decision. Any reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition Under 37 CFR 1.47(a)." No additional petition fee is required.

Any further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed to: Mail Stop PCT, Commissioner for Patents, Office of PCT Legal Administration, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, with the contents of the letter marked to the attention of the Office of PCT Legal Administration.



Anthony Smith
Attorney-Advisor
Office of PCT Legal Administration
Tel: (571) 272-3298
Fax: (571) 273-0459